



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **First West Nile Virus Case Reported in North Dakota**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) disease in 2013 in a North Dakota resident has been confirmed. State health officials are urging people to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

The patient is a female in her 30s who resides in Grant County. The patient was not hospitalized for her illness.

“The identification of West Nile virus in a person is a reminder of the importance of taking precautions to protect ourselves from the bites of mosquitoes,” said Alicia Lepp, epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health. “In addition to a human case, two crows and three mosquito pools in Grand Forks County and three mosquito pools in Cass County tested positive for WNV, indicating the active transmission of WNV in North Dakota and the need for people to protect themselves.”

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR 3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or permethrin when outdoors. Always follow the directions on the manufacturer’s label.
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- When possible, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts while outside.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

In 2012, 89 human cases of West Nile virus were reported to the Department of Health. In addition, West Nile infection was identified in 14 horses, two birds and one dog.

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*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*

The common symptoms of West Nile virus include fever, headache, body aches and rash. People with more severe illness may experience symptoms such as stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma and even death. Fortunately, most people infected with West Nile virus develop the less severe form of the disease or develop no symptoms at all.

West Nile virus activity will be updated Wednesday mornings each week throughout the West Nile virus season on the Department of Health's West Nile virus website at [www.ndhealth.gov/wnv](http://www.ndhealth.gov/wnv).

For more information, contact Alicia Lepp or Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 1.800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.

*Note: The Department of Health's Policy for Release of Information Concerning West Nile Virus Cases is included on the next page for your information.*

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## **Policy for Release of Information Concerning West Nile Virus Cases**

The North Dakota Department of Health strives to protect the identity and the privacy of people who are infected with diseases, including West Nile virus, while at the same time protecting the public's health. The following list identifies the information the Department of Health will release to the media and/or public concerning West Nile virus cases.

### **West Nile Virus Cases**

- Number of cases per county
- Number of males and females statewide
- Number hospitalized statewide
- Number of cases by age group statewide
  - Younger than 10
  - Ages 10 to 19
  - Ages 20 to 29
  - Ages 30 to 39
  - Ages 40 to 49
  - Ages 50 to 59
  - Age 60 and older

### **West Nile Virus Deaths**

- Region of the state in which the person resided
- Age group of the person
- The person's gender
- If the person had any underlying medical conditions

Information about a West Nile virus death will be released only after the department has consulted with the patient's health-care provider and after the provider has communicated with the patient's family. The local public health unit in which the person resided also will be notified prior to release of information.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Eberl, North Dakota Department of Health Office of Public Information, at 701.328.2372.

*Communication policy developed 2002; updated 2006.*

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